

20 January 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Intelligence Support Staff

SUBJECT: The NIS Gazetteer Problem

1. For many years the NIS Gazetteer Program has been directed and essentially financed by the Agency through its NIS Program. The research and compilation of the names work is performed by the Office of Geography, Department of Interior. By contract, some [REDACTED] per year has been provided to cover the cost of some 55 to 60 persons in that office. As of this time, a gazetteer has been produced for each country in the world. However, the quality ranges from very poor to good -- many were produced years ago and from very poor sources. Also, new and better translation systems are employed in many language areas during the maintenance cycle, now on an approximate 10-year basis.

2. In addition to direct financing, the Agency makes other contributions to the Gazetteer Program. OBI directs the scheduling (thru NIS Committee), the MD/CR punches the IBM cards, and PSD prints the gazetteers. A current study is evaluating the possibility of having OCS prepare tapes to drive the Photon printer in PSD. It is anticipated that, if feasible, such a procedure would improve the flexibility of the gazetteer and permit a marked reduction in the timing of the maintenance cycle.

3. About a year ago, a problem began developing over the financing of the Gazetteer Program. We were directed to reduce the budget [REDACTED] This reduced production somewhat but was not considered to be a serious cutback. However, the current budget for FY 68 calls for a very serious cut [REDACTED]

If this holds, the program virtually will come to a standstill and a serious loss of expertise personnel will take place by 1 July 1967. This cutback results from a feeling on the part of DoB (and concurred in by DDI) that the Agency should not fund for the production of standardized foreign names. Rather, it is felt that this type of work should be centralized in government, probably in DoB, where name processing work already exists in the mapping units. To further complicate this problem, Interior is legally responsible for the NIS but has never seen fit to fund the foreign names work. They do cover the domestic names work in their Geological Survey Unit.

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4. As things stand at the present time, the following facts and/or actions appear to be involved:

a. The Agency will budget [REDACTED] in FY 68 and 25X1A1a probably provide no funds in FY 69 and beyond.

b. Interior has requested BoB to establish a study group to review the whole problem and recommend a "home" for this function where normal funding would be provided.

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c. Interior plans to request that BoB permit funding (somewhere in government) of \$175,000 in FY 68 in addition to the Agency's [REDACTED] to maintain the office at a minimum level until such time as the study has been completed.

5. Our concern over this problem is manifold:

a. The need for geographic name standardization is obvious. It is required in the Intelligence Community, the rest of the government, and the U.S. as a whole.

b. The first steps toward international standardization are now being taken through the UN. It has called an international meeting for September 1967 in Geneva, Switzerland. The U.S., through the BGN, is a leader in this effort. This must not be allowed to diminish nor die.

c. While going along with the proposed study to find a permanent home for this function, we are most anxious that the Office of Geography (Interior) does not "die" while the study is being made.

6. This is in response to your recent request to the Director of Basic Intelligence.

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Director of Basic Intelligence

cc: ADDI

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